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# SUMMARY

## *Regional Spatial Development*

### *Scheme of Pleven*

The Regional Spatial Development Scheme (RSDS) of Pleven is a strategic document with interventions of clearly determined spatial nature, aiming at a more efficient, effective and environmentally-friendly utilization of available resources and potentials of Pleven District, both in terms of its internal components and integrity as well as its position within the national space and the Northwest NUTS 2 region. The main objective of the development and application of the RSDS is to develop a spatially arranged basis and regulator for implementing not only the regional but also different socio-economic sectorial planning at district level in the context of European and national spatial development, in order to achieve a complex, integrated planning.

Pleven District has a central geographic location in Northern Bulgaria, with territory, providing connectivity between the Eastern and Western parts of the Danube Valley, between the capital and major urban centers in the northeast of the country. It has a wide outlet to the Danube, providing access to the Trans-European transport corridor, formed by the river, as well as specific development tools (Danube Strategy). The close proximity to the capital and the centrality of the city of Pleven and the region, compared to other centers in this part of the country, are a prerequisite for strengthening the regional role and the significance of Pleven District in the country's development in the next programming period.



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The terrain is mostly with flat character, which is favorable for transport - communication links within the region and neighboring areas. The combination of favorable soil and climatic conditions with flat relief contributes to the development of intensive agriculture. There are conditions for the restoration of the traditional for the city agribusiness cycle and its modernization in order to generate products with high added value, which in turn creates conditions for the development and diversification of industries and service activities.

The rich history, combined with the traditions of agriculture, the existence of a unique nature, are a good basis for the development of profitable integrated tourist product. Furthermore, the presence of significant protected areas, which are a prerequisite for the initiation of recreational interest, would also contribute for the development of tourism.

The only university in the Northwest region is located on the territory of Pleven. There is an option to extend the "academic sector" through new approaches and structures, such as the "Interuniversity Campus", which is anticipated in Integrated Plan for Urban Regeneration and Development of Pleven.

Pleven has a relatively preserved demographic potential in the northern periphery of the district center. There is a reduction in the population of the district and the city. Pleven holds one of the highest rates of reduction in the population of a large city in Bulgaria, as well as migration rates of young and educated people mainly towards Sofia. There is concentration of minorities, which leads to problems related to the economic and social integration. Overcoming these issues is possible by strengthening the links with the hinterland in order to stimulate the demographic and socio-economic "consolidation" of Pleven and to strengthen its role as a center of growth in this part of the national space - by seeking agglomeration effect the development of the district.



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There are sufficient in territory industrial areas in Pleven District which are heavily depreciated and should undergo transformation in order to achieve positive development of the economy of the district. The activity of key to the district's economy companies from the food industry, heavy machinery, etc. is terminated, and is not compensated by new more promising sectors and companies. There is a risk of deepening the economic stagnation because of the long stand-off in the economic development of the area. As a result of these and other factors, the purchasing power of the population is significantly below average. That is why stimulating small and medium business, building business information centers, participation in programs at national level are necessary priorities.

Pleven has a balanced spatial structure with evenly spaced secondary support centers in the periphery. The area is compact, clearly gravitating to the natural administrative and economic center of the region with relatively uniform land use structure and patterns of spatial planning.

There is a disproportion and problems such as "center-periphery", affecting both the quality of life, the characteristics of the living environment, and in terms of socio-economic characteristics of the region. The regional center is significantly behind from other major cities in the country. There is a clear imbalance between the development of the northern and southern periphery of the city of Pleven.

The good transport access is of major significance for the mobility of the inhabitants and the closer social and economic relations of the settlements in the district. Despite the central location of the regional center, the standard accessibility to it of 90 minutes is not fulfilled for 20% of the settlements. It is necessary to improve the state of the national, municipal roads and streets.



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For the utilization of the potentials in the district and overcoming the problems that present obstacles to its development, a set of strategic goals have been developed, which are the first direct form of specification of the intended and perceived by stakeholders and local community Vision for development of the regional territory to the planning horizon. It meets the following basic principles of sustainable and integrated spatial development:

- balanced territorial development by maintaining the hierarchical system of settlements;
- strengthening the relationship between the area of Pleven and the agricultural hinterland;
- accessibility and connectivity of the settlement structure in the field;
- sustainable urban development through integrated approach;
- territorial integration;
- conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The strategic framework of RSDR is defined by three strategic objectives (SO):

SO 1: Achieving a sustainable and balanced development of the district through the implementation of an integrated overall approach in the development and structure of the district territory;

SO 2: Achieving a positive socio-economic development of the effective capitalization of local comparative advantages, resources and potentials of Pleven;

SO 3: Improving the internal regional integration and mitigating disparities regarding standards and conditions for life and business in the district;

The achievement of the strategic objectives will be provided by key priority areas focused on achieving a high level of integration in the development of the territory:



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- Spatial Planning : Achieving balanced regional development through the implementation of a common integrated structure concept;
- Transport and communications : improving internal connectivity and integration with the rest of the national space;
- Economic development: fostering development by intervening key fields and territories for the district;
- Terms of life and business: improving the business and living conditions and mitigating of internal regional disparities.
- More efficient management of territory

Pleven has a leading role within North Bulgaria, which involves large-scale initiatives and interventions in its spatial development, consistent with the role that it performs in the regional and national context and with its potential comparative advantages and available resources, which should improve the overall and investment attractiveness of the district and to establish adequate conditions for sustainable development of the territory.